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News Release

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Philadelphia VA breaks ground on 450-space parking garage

It's not every day that the sight of bulldozers and construction fences can bring out emotions in otherwise rational adults. But after more than a decade of dealing with a chronic parking shortage, the sight of construction activity for a new parking garage is indeed one for sore eyes.

Construction has begun on Phase 1 of the garage, a \$9 million, 450-space project which is the latest step in efforts to relieve the parking problem on PVAMC's urban, land-locked campus. The five-story structure is scheduled for completion in July 2011. A second phase could add another 650 spaces once funded.

Veterans and staff members turned out the afternoon of March 26 to mark a ceremonial groundbreaking. Participating in the groundbreaking were Tom Nason, Nason Construction, Inc.; Phil Hatsis, Philadelphia VAMC chief engineer; Noli Alarcon, Haahs Associates architectural firm; Stephanie Starks, President of AFGE Local 1793; Richard Citron, Philadelphia VAMC Director; Michael E. Moreland, Director of VA Healthcare – VISN4; and Sergeant First Class Troy Lee of the South Philadelphia High School Jr. ROTC. Cadets from South Philly posted the colors and interacted with staff and Veterans throughout the day.

Several veteran service officers and legislative staffers were also in attendance. Angelo Romeo, Director of Gloucester County Veterans Affairs, took the opportunity to thank union officials and staff members who have remained so flexible throughout the process, with the aim of improving the parking situation for Veterans. Nearly 500 staff members now park off-site and another 700 subscribe to the Public Transit Subsidy.

Mr. Citron also thanked those who turned out on a blustery Friday afternoon for the event.

“Of course any day you break ground for a garage in Philadelphia is a beautiful day,” he said.

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